Midwest Assault

Hardcore Fanzine

Issue #1 $.50 Summer 2002

Introduction

When I was a freshman in high school my friends and I started a punk rock/ska oriented zine. It came out pretty infrequently, but we continued to do it until I was a junior because we really enjoyed what we did. Incidentally, we were just very lazy and so we only put out four issues through out the course of three years. Then about a year and a half ago Sears and I decided to start a zine called "Midwest Assault." We ended up having the majority of the content typed up and formatted, but because of my laziness, the zine ended up fizzling out. I didn't really have much drive to do anything at that time, which was the main reason for its failure. In fact, up until recently I was pretty content just being a spectator in the hardcore scene.

Then a few months ago Bane, Reach the Sky, and Glasseater played with Dead to Fall and Tyrannosaurus X at the Fireside and it sparked something inside of me. That show revived a feeling in me that had been lacking for I don't know how long and it made me want to be more than just a bystander. Seeing Tyrannosaurus X for the first time that night reminded me of why I got into hardcore in the first place and so did Bane. That show symbolized to me everything that I love about hardcore. There were no fights or tough guy bullshit, just a bunch of kids having fun and that's all that mattered. I wish every show could be like that. That night also made me realize that there are a lot of positive things going on in Chicago (and the entire Midwest for that matter). A ton of bands from the area have been getting signed and putting out good records on labels that have good distribution, touring a fair amount, and getting more exposure by getting slots on bigger shows and fests.

So, that is what this zine is going to focus on... the Midwest. It seems that some of us are so concerned with what is happening out east that we take what we have for granted sometimes (myself included). But we have to realize that our scene will never be like Boston's if we don't support and appreciate what we have going on here. So get active; start a band, do a zine (submit writing to my zine if you'd like), try and book shows, offer to help flier for other shows, start a distro, look for new places to have shows (the Fireside and the Knights of Columbus won't be around forever), etc. There are a lot of little things that can be done that could make a difference. If we don't make an effort to change things for the better, then we don't have the right to complain. With that said, here is the first issue of my zine for what it's worth. I sincerely hope you enjoy it.

-Steve Kane-
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Disclaimer

I apologize if the photocopying on this isn't the best quality. I had to go where I could get this printed for free even if that meant I had to sacrifice some things (i.e. photocopying quality). The following issues will look much better, I promise.

Preacher Gone to Texas Interview

Preacher Gone to Texas is a melodic hardcore band from the Quad Cities area of Iowa/Illinois. After releasing a demo, they've played a ton of shows and have just finished recording a full length, It's called "Choice vs. Chance" and will be out on the Sinister Label in later May (probably before this is out). It's going to turn a lot of people on to them for sure. This interview was conducted with Matt Moody a few months ago.

Steve: What is everyone's name and how do they contribute to PGTT?

Matt: Ok, this could be a long answer.

Steve: That's ok. Depth is good.

Matt: Well it's me (Matt M.) I play guitar and do some vocals as well as design the website and stuff, there is Matt J who does vocals and sets up tours. Seth who plays drums and is the band accountant, Mike who plays guitar, and there used to be Ben who played bass, but due to some crazy stuff we now have Mark who plays bass.

Matt: We all do more than I can really write down.

Steve: What happened to Ben? Or is that something you'd rather not talk about?

Matt: Umm the honest truth, since it's been all over the Chicago hardcore message board. Ben is still our friend and was a very important part of the band. But do to some bad decisions on his part and missing practices and whatnot we had to get a new bassist. We don't really want to go to in depth about what all went down.

Steve: How long have you been a band for?

Matt: We in one form or another have been a band for a pretty long time. But as this incarnation of preacher we have been around since, I guess, '98 or '99. I believe that is when we released our first demo and did our first tour with our current line up and name. We have changed a lot musically since then, but it's still the same band.

Steve: Speaking of musical direction, how would you describe your sound to someone who has never heard you before?

Matt: That's the question that gets every band. I guess if I had to, I'd describe us as a heavy melodic band. Our new ideas are involving a bit of sound manipulation, but I guess to just say plain out. We are a melodic hardcore band.

Steve: Oh, I understand not wanting to get tagged or faceted.

Matt: Yeah, we often get pigeonholed because of our location as well.

Steve: Why? Do people think you will be a screamo band or something?

Matt: Certain owners of certain labels have kind of made a joke of our location. It makes us the underdogs, but I guess we are beginning to like being the underdogs. It was a surprise to a lot of New York kids that Iowa had hardcore.

Matt: Um, well basically each genre of music has so many different spectrums of sound. Like there are tons of different hardcore bands, everything from fast to slow from heavy to mosh etc.

Matt: I mean it's like saying something is blue, when it's royal blue. There are hundreds of different shades of blue.

Steve: Oh I totally agree with that statement. But personally, I associate Iowa with screamo/emo/grind stuff mostly.

Matt: Yeah, I'll agree Iowa has been more prominent for those styles.

Steve: Exactly...what with bands like the Vida Blue and all... moving onward. PGTT seems a little more agenda/issue oriented than some of the hardcore bands out right now. What are some of your songs about?

Matt: Our songs deal with all sorts of subjects. One is about the way media causes a lot of us to be ashamed of our bodies and causes eating disorders. It also touches how unsettlingly common eating disorders are. Devoted apology is about parents or people who work hard for others. Parents sometimes work jobs they hate, just for their kids to have a better life. I guess the song in a way is a thank you to all parents for putting their family first. It's tough to really explain all our songs, but they all come from personal things and are things I think anyone can relate to. You won't find too many songs about girls on the upcoming album.

Steve: That's pretty much what I gathered. I know the last time I saw you Matt was commenting on some of the songs and they seemed very personal, which I thought was awesome. I think it was before you guys played 'Devoted Apology.'

Matt: Yeah, a lot of the new stuff is very personal. In a way it's a way to deal with situations and share things with people.

Steve: Really? Is there any particular song you feel strongly about, either lyrically or musically?

Matt: I'm very excited about the newest songs we are writing musically. Lyrically and situation wise I'm very into "sorrow for the wounded." Which is about being able to start again after disaster, learning to trust again after being hurt. In the lyrics there is a point where it comes down to "can I love you?" which is very personal to me. In my life I've been in a lot of bad situations with parents or friends. For a long time I didn't believe love existed in any scene and I even questioned the motive of a lot of friends. The song deals with a lot of those feelings of why do I try so hard, why trust people to just get hurt.

Matt: I guess it's a way to get back on the horse and start again.

Steve: That's good. I think a lot of people can really relate to that... and take something positive away from the song.

Matt: Yeah that's our hopes as well. We are a very positive band. Or like to think we are.

Steve: Yeah, but it's a different kind of positive... not a "GO!" kind of positive.

(Laughter)

Steve: So, what is the song writing process like for you guys? Is it a combined effort or does one person usually write the music and another will write the lyrics?

Matt: Matt J. usually does all lyrics and the music is usually a combined effort. Mike brings a lot of songs to practice, and I'm more of an on the spot writer. Somehow it all works out.

Matt: We all contribute our own styles.

Steve: Pretty much the culmination of everyone's personality and habits?

Matt: Yeah, pretty much.

Matt: Music is our lives.

Matt: I think anyone in any band can agree. That they would love to be for kids what their favorite bands were for them. Music is so much more than just sounds from guitars and drums and whatnot. It's changed my life.

Steve: I agree, I think anyone who loves music, wishes they could be that to someone else... whether they are in a band or not. How are the shows you guys play? I noticed after you played in DuPage there were a lot of kids talking about you and there was like a buzz. Is that commonplace?

Matt: Honestly, at home shows no one really seems to care other then some close friends. It took going out of town to see what people really thought of us. I agree, the DuPage show was a really good time. Our New York tour was the same way, we got a lot of great feedback and

people were really nice. We are fully excited when there is any response good or bad, it's nice to honestly know what people think. But to answer your question, most of our out of town shows have been great.

Matt: We plan on doing a lot of touring this summer and possibly a few week/week ends during winter and spring break.

Steve: I think that happens with a lot of local bands. I know in Chicago there are so many good bands that go unnoticed.

Matt: Yeah, I think it's really unfortunate because people take it for granted.

Steve: Yeah definitely and then after they are gone everyone gets into them and wishes they were still around. So, what's in store for PGTT? What can we expect from you guys in the future?

Matt: We sort of are/have been taking a hiatus from shows to write for our upcoming album. It's going to be put out by the Horizontal Collective. With that we hope to shop around to bigger labels, I guess the sky is the limit. We are also planning on a lot of touring provided we can find a van.

Matt: Like I said, the sky is the limit. I'm just begging for a reason to take a break from college and tour non-stop.

Matt: And I think majority of the band feels the same way; we'd love to make this our lives.

Steve: Yeah... definitely. So is there anything else you would like to add?

Matt: Umm, I think you got it all. Thanks to everyone who has come out to shows or done anything for us. And thank you for doing this interview. www.preachergonetotexas.com

Steve: Anytime.

Matt: I can be reached at either moody@preachergonetotexas.com

Matt: Or matthew7_5@hotmail.com

Steve: Awesome. Thank you very much.

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Columns

Smoking.

I was in seventh grade when I began smoking. For some reason substances were always appealing to me, even at an early age. So, I decided to start trying them, beginning with cigarettes. Much like every smoker out there, I started off very slowly, only smoking a few cigarettes here and there. I was very worried about the idea of addiction though. I really didn't want to become dependent on something because there were a lot of other kids my age who were already very addicted to cigarettes.

But like with all substances, I began smoking more and more frequently because I really liked how much older it made me feel. It kept progressing in this fashion until around my freshman year of high school when I noticed that I was in fact, addicted to cigarettes. I kept upping my nicotine intake until I was smoking nearly a pack a day (which is quite a lot for a fifteen year old). Then around the middle of my sophomore year I became very ill. I was so sick that I completely lost the desire to smoke, so I quit cold turkey. And the strange part was that I felt no withdrawal symptoms whatsoever. There were no nicotine cravings or irritability, or even chest pain for that matter. It seemed like I was done with smoking for good.

Fast forward to the winter of 2000. I just turned nineteen years old and I had not touched a cigarette since I was sixteen. Things were going terrible in my life at this point. I had no job and I was basically failing out of community college, so I did everything I could to ignore my problems. Over winter break I started drinking all the time with my friends and "socially smoking." Much like before my smoking once again progressed into full-fledged addiction. This time it was much worse. Since I had no job I was constantly borrowing money from my parents and coming up with new ways to get money in order to buy cigarettes. It was pathetic. I did this up until this September, when I decided that not only is smoking unhealthy, but it is also financially draining. So, I quit cold turkey once again and this time it wasn't so easy. Every withdrawal symptom I didn't get the previous time I quit, I received double of this time around. For roughly two weeks all I thought about was smoking. My chest felt like it was caving in and I was constantly uncomfortable. I was in a bad mood and I caught myself being rude to people.

However, all the discomfort was worth it. I can breathe so much easier now and I generally feel much better than when I smoked. I don't get headaches quite so much anymore and I don't get winded like I used to either. Although I caved in twice and smoked on Christmas and one other time in January, I haven't even thought about it since then. The cravings have stopped and I've come to loathe cigarettes as a whole, especially now that many of my friends have quit as well.

-Steve Kane-

So I'm sitting here at home on Sunday night with a completely blank mind after a really bad night at work. Steve needed a couple more people to write articles for this zine so I decided to give it a shot. This won't be very long but it's just something that has been on my mind for quite a while.

Some people might say, "Who does she think she is? She hasn't been involved in the scene for very long," thinking that my words or opinions aren't really valid. I myself am the first to admit that I may not know every old school band or even close to half of them from the beginning of hardcore or every new and upcoming band out now, but I do know that there are more people willing to familiarize you with these bands than not. In the game of hardcore trivia I would lose terribly. But you know what? Tough shit.

When I first started going to shows regularly with a really good friend, I didn't care whom I was a friend with, who I offended or who I pissed off. This was only about a year and a half ago. I said a lot of stupid shit for the sheer purpose of shock value, only to realize that it did nothing but hurt me. It kept me from making a lot of friendships that I value dearly now. I'm glad that I have grown up and I now have some of the best friends that I have ever had in my entire life.

I hear a lot of people saying how bad the scene in Chicago has been concerning people being welcoming to new kids as of late. I seem to disagree a great deal. It definitely goes both ways, but if you don't seem approachable then you aren't going to be approached. I myself didn't start making new friends until I let MY guard down and tried my hand at talking to people. Yeah of course it was uncomfortable, but I found that people seemed more apt to open their arms with forgiveness than holding a grudge for things I had said in the past that may have offended or pissed off someone. It took a while, but as I already said, I have some of the greatest friends a person could want. I can't even begin to imagine how much easier it would be for a person with a completely clean slate to get to know people in this little place. If you want to see some progress then take the initiative.

-Noelle-

~~Why I'm better than you~~
Why I'm XStraight EdgeX

It's strange, but my reasons when I claimed straight edge are far different from the reasons I hold today. I'm not sure if its coincidence or forced, but either way I'm glad I still feel the same way. When I was in 7th grade 3 of my best friends and I made a pact that we wouldn't smoke or drink. We (mainly me) used to talk about how stupid it was, I remember getting worked up about the idiocy of smoking pot and getting drunk. Within a year of that 'pact' everyone besides me was smoking cigarettes, pot, and drinking. None of them wanted to tell me, they knew how opinionated and strong I was in these beliefs. When I finally did find out I remember the lectures and the talk of betrayal I gave to every one of them. I knew they didn't care and I knew they'd all be doing other drugs in no time. For the most part I was right, all but one of them started doing other drugs and smoking pot and drinking regularly. So now I was not only pissed off at the world, but I was pissed off at

my friends. I was so alienated; I was the only one I knew that wanted nothing to do with the mainstream drinking culture and the drug use that was expected of my subculture. At this time I was really into death metal. It was pretty much my life and I couldn't find a place where I really fit in. A lot of the metal shows I went to were populated by sexist meatheads and the drug/alcohol use I despised.

In 8th grade I claimed straight edge. I had read something about it and heard from some of my punk rock friends what it was all about. I immediately started saying I was straight edge. I was so insanely proud to be apart of this subculture, I wore big black x's on my hands daily and told anyone and everyone who would listen why I thought drunks were idiots. I was self righteous, arrogant, and rude about it. I didn't know what hardcore was yet and was still very much into death metal. I was still alienated, but I felt a part of something bigger. It was nice.

Freshman year of high school I dove deeper into metal and discovered a few bands that would change me forever. I believe **Hatebreed** was the most important. It was so heavy, I loved it right away. I remember reading the lyrics about pride and family and *needing* to be a part of whatever it was they were a part of. Hatebreed, Madball, and Earth Crisis was one of the first hardcore shows I ever went to. It was at the Metro and I was in awe. Because it was at the Metro, I couldn't see any dancing very well, and didn't know anyone there this show isn't what got me hooked. I saw **Race Traitor** a few months later. I dragged my friend to the fireside and ended up seeing this band that talked about politics between every song. There was hardly anyone there so I was right up front to see the dancing. My friend called it "gorilla dancing" but I was so completely enthralled. I loved the music and I couldn't believe that the people in these bands were actually intelligent. After this show I dragged whoever I could to go see every show that came around. I was really quiet and didn't know many people but that was part of the thrill.

It wasn't until I started bringing my boyfriend to shows (yes, I was the one to bring him to shows...) that I became part of the 'scene'. Before that I was still hanging out with the same crowd that did drugs and got drunk. No one was really into hardcore, until I met a group of kids from Lake Zurich. I could not believe that there were other straight edge hardcore kids in the suburbs. I started hanging out with them a lot. Their idea of a good time was doing 'bad stuff'. So we became the typical straight edge rowdy kids going out and causing trouble. It was fantastic. I was still really arrogant and self righteous about straight edge. I was glad that there were finally other people to back me up about it too. This was about the time I got my straight edge tattoo. It's the catalyst records symbol on my back. I believe I just turned 17, I don't regret it. Really I don't.

After a while I got really tired of those kids. I don't know what it was, maybe realizing that all people that drink weren't so bad, but I got humbled. I started studying Buddhism and reading a lot of books. I was so humbled that I almost dropped straight edge. I don't know if I wanted to give in or if I just thought that I was being stupid and needed to do something about it. I couldn't believe how arrogant I

was, I shelled up a bit after this and didn't tell people I was edge as much. I haven't worn a straight edge shirt or X'ed up since then.

This was about the time I became involved in the scene. It was my late junior year of high school and my boyfriend and I would go to every show possible. Not only would we go to the shows but I would actually talk to the people. He was a lot more outgoing than I was so he made friends right away, whereas id been going to shows for over a year and didn't know anyone. It was strange but he ended up introducing me to most people. I was a lot less confident with being straight edge and I was thinking more and more of just dropping the label altogether. I felt like there was no need to label myself and limit my actions. I thought it was just as stupid as drinking. Although I never touched any alcohol or drugs, for a couple of months I did drop the label, it just didn't feel right. Eventually I broke up with the guy I was seeing and things turned around.

I started hanging out with kids involved in the scene and got to connect with a lot of people that had the same dilemma as myself. I had changed so much that I was wondering if it was a good idea to still be straight edge. It just didn't seem right to be in the same place I was when I felt like I progressed so much from when I claimed in 8th grade. But at the same time the people I started hanging out with, and actually feeling like straight edge and hardcore kids were family, people I could actually depend on, taught me a lot. Everything I learned seemed to point me in the direction of straight edge. I realized that the hardcore scene, as cheesy as it sounds, was a haven for people that hated mainstream culture. If you just wanted to hang out cause you got picked on, talk about politics because no one else cared, or listen to music because you loved it you could get away. I was introduced to so many amazing bands, and fell back in love with the scene. It was exciting that I could be excited about hardcore again.

The 'true 'till college' cliché almost got me too. You go away to school and start hanging out with a new crowd and no one understands why you don't drink. It used to just be "Oh no that's Heather she's straight edge, she doesn't drink". All of a sudden it was "You're what? Why don't you drink again?" It's pretty unnerving when you can't even explain your lifestyle to other people. It made sense in my head but out loud or in discourse my argument was a mess. It took me a while but I got it sorted out. I realized that I didn't have to make it an argument or even explain it if I didn't want to. But after a while I did want to explain it and I could. I had the right idea in 7th grade, I want no part of drinking culture.

I hated mainstream culture that endorsed drinking when I was in 7th grade and I hate it now. I think it's another way for corporations to control our life and I'm so sad that my friends get sucked into it. I'm not arrogant anymore, and I know that I really don't know much of anything. But what I'm sure of right now is that I want no part of drinking or drug culture. Straight edge probably saved me from a lot of things, and kept me out of a lot of trouble. I'm glad I'm still here and I don't think ill be leaving for a long time.

-Heather Owen-

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Dead to Fall Interview

Dead to Fall are a metallic hardcore band from the northern suburbs of Chicago. They've been around for a few years now and it seems that more and more people are getting into them with every show they play. This interview was conducted via e-mail with singer Jon Hunt a few months back.

Steve: So give me a brief run down on the band and its history...

Jon: DTF formed about 3 years ago, we did a few DIY recordings, switched some members around, played some more shows. We formed into the lineup we have now about a year ago. We recorded a demo last summer ('01) in Detroit with Mike Hasty, and that resulted in us getting signed with Victory. Now we're just planning on recording a full length and a lot of touring.

Steve: Is there any specific ideal/belief that the members of Dead to Fall adhere to?

Jon: I don't think we embrace one belief/ideal as a whole band. We are all really great friends and just like to play. Everyone in the band has a belief that separates them from the rest of the guys, and we just try to accept our differences and get along.

Steve: What are some of your songs about? Are there any messages you are trying to convey through your lyrics?

Jon: I think for the most part I write about things I'm struggling with personally. One song/lyric is sometimes just a way I was feeling at a particular moment or something I feel myself dealing with everyday. Other times I write just to work through something in my head. I have a few songs that are about how quickly a

friendship or relationship can go sour, and especially when you know it's your fault. We have another song (Tu se Morta), which is taken from an opera written by Monte Verdi, and translated. Our lyrics cover a lot of ground I guess.

Steve: Word is that you guys just signed to Victory Records. How did that all come about?

Jon: we recorded a five-song e.p. this summer and gave a copy to Kathi at VR to try and help us get a label to support us. A few weeks later she asked us what we would think about being on VR. It kind of took us by surprise, but we were down for it. Then over a period of like five or six months the staff came to some shows, came to a practice, and it ended up happening. We are all really glad that we are at the point we are now, and excited about the future of the band.

Steve: How have they been treating you so far?

Jon: They have been very helpful. Having a great staff of people working to get your band exposure is awesome. We really haven't experienced a lot of it because we don't have a cd out yet.

Steve: Were any other labels showing interest in picking you guys up? And if so, what made you choose Victory over them?

Jon: Victory was the only label that showed any real interest in our band, but we didn't really have the demo shopped to any other labels. We have always wanted to take the band as far as we could. I think we try to make the band as professional as we can. Victory was then the ideal choice for us; they are the biggest independent label out there. Being on Victory would give us the chance to take the band to the next level.

Steve: What's in store for dead to fall? Are you planning on making the band a full time thing?

Jon: In late May we are heading out to record a full length for VR, and then hitting the road for as long as we can. So far, all we have booked is a tour with Caliban and A Life Once Lost in July. If we had our way I think we would tour year round, with maybe a little bit off here and there. We would all love to do Dead to Fall full time.

Steve: Anything you'd like to add in closing?

Jon: Thanks for the interview, and we have a cd coming out in late August. (Had to plug it). Later

Dead to Fall have a new song out on the Victory Style 5 compilation, which makes for a nice preview of what's to come. I recommend checking out that comp if only for their song and check out their record later on this summer.

Reviews

I know that most of these reviews are outdated and many of them aren't even hardcore related, but since this is a first issue I just reviewed records that I have gotten in the past few months. And I plan on reviewing most things that fall under the hardcore spectrum, so if you'd like anything reviewed contact me.

Arma Angelus- Where sleeplessness is rest from nightmares- Eulogy Recordings

These guys have been around for a few years, but this is their first full-length record and it far surpasses the older material. Although their older stuff was great, this record seems to be far more representative of the way the band has always wanted to sound since the beginning. Sure, comparisons have been made to Damnation and bands of that ilk, but Arma is definitely doing their own thing. They don't really fit in with the new wave of emo-metal bands, or the atypical mosh bands, so I don't think people really understand what they are trying to do. But when it comes down to it, Arma Angelus are five guys playing hardcore because they love it and truly care about what they are doing. Hopefully that still counts for something.

Bury Your Dead- Demo

This is one of the most interesting demo's I've heard in a while. Bury your Dead are from Providence, RI and play great moshcore along the lines of Hatebreed and Until the End with some Arkangel thrown in there as well. On this demo they have two singers, one screamy and one that sounds like a less tough sounding Jamie Hatebreed. Now, they only have one singer, the tougher sounding one, which is a shame because I like Mark's voice better, but I'm sure they'll still be good. There are five songs total (including their 'theme song' or sorts, which is just one huge mosh part). My only qualm is with the lyrics because they are kind of cheesy at times, but I'm sure they'll get better the longer they are around. Check this band out, I can see them blowing up.

Carry On- A Life less plagued- Bridge Nine

Bridge Nine has really been on a streak of releasing quality records lately and this one is certainly no exception. Carry on plays a refreshing blend of aggressive and melodic hardcore with lyrical content ranging from love, loneliness, sXe, and so on. In all honesty, this is one of my favorite hardcore records of last year. The liner notes and artwork look slick (obviously done by Jacob Bannon), the lyrics are well thought out, and the music is catchy as hell; high fives all around. It's a shame this band broke up already.

Crash and Burn- Demo

Crash and Burn is a relatively new band to the Chicago area, but it's kind of hard to tell when listening to this or seeing them live. All five songs are tight and catchy and the recording is great for a demo. Crash and Burn have a real New York sound to them and they have their moments of Chokehold style mosh as well, but it all works. The vocals and lyrics are raw and pissed and blend with the music well. I could go on and on about them because they are easily one of the best Chicago bands right now, but you should just check them out for yourself. To get the demo e-mail them at x12Fux@hotmail.com.

The Dedication- Youth Murder Anthems- Deathwish Inc.

The Dedication is yet another one of the great new bands from Boston and this is their debut e.p on Jacob Bannon's new label. On the whole, it's a pretty solid effort, but I can't help but think these kids won't really get the credit that is due. They are doing something that most hardcore bands aren't doing, and that is doing some serious genre crossing. Sure, they are an "old school" hardcore band, but they don't really have many mosh parts. And they are an emotional band, but they aren't whiny like Mineral. It seems that The Dedication is on a mission to stray from conventional genre labels and they are doing a pretty good job at it. I've heard them compared to Dischord bands like Rites of Spring and Dag Nasty, to Turning Point, and even to "emo" bands like Moss Icon. Simply put, these guys could fall anywhere under the independent music category. So, if you are into emotionally charged hardcore from Boston, do yourself a favor and check out the Dedication.

Death Cab for Cutie- The Photo Album- Barsuk Records

I had been looking forward to this album coming out for a number of months before it actually did. And upon first listen, it was something of a disappointment. It seemed that much of what I loved about Death Cab (I.e. the analog recording, and the simple pop song structures) was missing from this record. However, like with many great albums, it takes a few listens to truly appreciate it. There are some total lo-fi songs on here, which I completely dig and there are some really great pop songs. As a complete record, "The Photo Album" is probably the most cohesive in the Death Cab discography. However, it is by no means the best. But

believe the hype, these guys are one of the best indie rock bands in existence right now.

From Autumn To Ashes- Too bad you're beautiful- Ferret

This is the debut full length from this PA emo-metalcore band. Most of these songs are about girls and love and the lyrics are actually pretty decent. There is also a fair amount of musical variety in the songs, but they tend to drag out way too long (there are multiple songs over 8 minutes). The real gems of this record are in the middle and there is even a sound clip from "Reality Bites" thrown in there too. I'm sure this band is following right in the successful footsteps of Poison the Well, so pick this up that way you can say you were into them first.

Hoods- Time the destroyer- Victory Records

I've seen this band a few times live and they always put on a decent show. They go off and you can really tell that they are into the music and what they have to say. However, I just cannot get into them on record. If you're into tough E chord mosh stuff, definitely check out this band.

Robert Nanna/ Elizabeth Elmore Split- Troubleman Unlimited

Both of these individuals should be household names by now after their work in the bands Braid (and now Hey Mercedes) and Sarge. This record is exactly what I expected it would be; two songs (one from each person) of pure pop pleasure. The Bob Nanna side showcases more of his singer/ songwriter persona ala City on Film rather than the more rock styles of Braid and Hey Mercedes. However, I think the Elizabeth Elmore side

definitely features the standout track. Although Sarge was a very good band, I believe Elmore's solo efforts will far surpass her previous bands material in song structure and in songwriting ability as well. Now that she is out on her own I get a real sense of Elmore's vocal range that really couldn't be heard on any Sarge record. So if you are looking for a solid record with pop sensibilities, look no further than this.

Paint it Black- Demo

Paint it Black is a new band from the Philadelphia area and features Dan Yemin (from lifetime!! and kid dynamite) on guitar. I'm not going to lie; my initial interest in them was because of the ex-lifetime factor (because they are one of my favorite bands ever). However, after hearing this, my interest has shifted quite a bit in the direction of "what will they do next?" PIB plays fast hardcore/punk rock somewhat similar to what Kid Dynamite played, but with a more early 80's, DC edge to it. The lyrics are political and tongue in cheek at the same time, but only 3/4 of the songs are witty and the other one is just kind of lame. "So don't talk until you take a walk in my chucks. What the fuck? I guess you're shit out of luck." Please... It sounds like they were struggling to keep the rhyming pattern going on that one. However, one song with silly lyrics doesn't really detract from the overall quality of this demo. And it seems that Jade Tree records feels the same way I do, because they are signed to that label now. I'm sure their full length will be great.

Panic- dying for it - Bridge Nine

Before I picked up this record I had heard numerous raves about Panic. In addition to the positive reviews of the 7", I heard they put on an amazing live show and were probably going to become one of the best hardcore bands around. Then upon first listen I wondered what all the hype was about, I didn't see what the big deal was. But I continued to listen in the hopes that I would figure out what everyone saw in this band. Then it hit me; Panic writes short, fast hardcore songs with such intensity and sincerity you can feel every word that is sung. There are six songs on the 7" and the entire thing couldn't be more than seven minutes long in its entirety. Every song has a sick dance part or a sing along and it makes me fall in love with hardcore all over again every time I listen to this e.p. So, I guess now I see what the hype was about and it's very well deserved.

Payback- Demo

Payback play tough, thrashy, moshy hardcore that I've heard compared to Biohazard, Madball, Suicidal Tendencies, and many others, but they don't really sound like any of those bands. They are definitely blurring the lines because in one song they can have a thrash circle pit part, a chug mosh part, and a skank part and it sounds cohesive. Plus, they have two singers with two distinctively different voices (one tough sounding and one with a more screamy approach) and that adds to their dynamic. I honestly think that a lot of kids with varied tastes in hardcore would be into these guys because they mix it up so well. Check out the 7" they have coming out on The Big Hurt Records soon.

Ringworm- Birth is Pain- Victory Records

This band has been around for about ten years or so, but this record is my first introduction to them. Usually after such a long career span, most hardcore bands tend to lose their edge

and get a bit stale. And I think that is definitely what has happened to Ringworm. A few tracks on this album caught my ear as being the definite standouts, but even those weren't anything to write home about. However, after seeing them live a few months ago, I know they are capable of so much more. They played their songs with such ferocity and passion it completely made up for the fact that this album is a bit of a dud. Although I'm not too into this record, I think that checking out their first record is definitely in order. (Actually, Deathwish Inc. is re-releasing their long out of print first record, 'The Promise' in a few months. I'll be picking that one up).

The Suicide File- s/t- Indecision Records

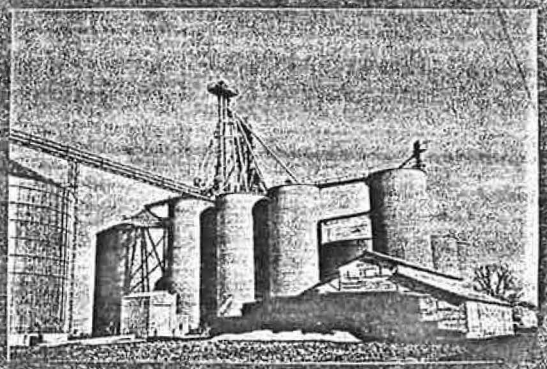
Ouch, I bet there was a lot of Boston scenester's crying themselves to sleep once this record came out. It's so brutal. This band is comprised of ex members of this band and that band, but what really matters is how amazingly hilarious and spiteful the lyrics are. For instance, "You are who you fuck, or so I'm told, in this miserable city where status is gold. I've seen shit-eating people who claw their way up, looking for acceptance that they never got." Or "so don't try to talk to me cause a thousand fuck you's will never be enough." What it boils down to is that everyone needs this record. The Suicide File is breathing new life into hardcore, get into it.

Terror- Demo

Terror is the new band that features Scott Vogel (vocalist for Buried Alive, Despair, Slugfest), Todd Jones (guitar player from Carry On), and the bass player and drummer from Shark Attack. So, before I even heard them I had a basic idea of what they would sound like and I was pretty correct. They use a lot of the fast parts that we're characteristic of Buried Alive and combine it with Carry On style mosh parts, but they have their own thing going on as well that I can't quite put my finger on. At times Vogel's voice is too mosh-metal sounding for the music, but that is pretty easy to get over. Simply put, Terror isn't quite as good as any of the member's previous bands, but with time I'm sure they will be. And I'm sure that all of the 'ex member' status they have going on will make them huge in no time no matter what (since everyone loved all of their old bands).

Tijuana Crime Scene- Change of Venue- Arise Records

This super group of sorts features members of esteemed bands such as The Get up Kids, the New Amsterdam's, and Reflector. Before hearing this e.p. I feared it would end up being like the pop tripe The Get up Kids have been releasing as of late. Much to my surprise (and joy), it wasn't and what I got was five songs of alt-country tinged indie rock. These songs are so good that an e.p's worth of music just isn't enough of this band for me. If you're looking for sound comparisons; think what it would sound like if The Jayhawk's and Uncle Tupelo were to play indie rock. Check this band out at all costs.



End Notes

This concludes the first issue of Midwest Assault. I hope you enjoyed it. I have big plans for issue #2, so be on the look out for that sometime soon (hopefully). Expect big changes format-wise, size-wise, content-wise, etc. It will still be the same zine; there will just be a lot more content and photos. If you are interested in submitting anything or have any questions or comments regarding the zine, please e-mail me at MidwestAssault@aol.com. Until the next issue, take care and thank you for the support.

Thank You List

Heather, Noelle, Sears, Donny, Charlie Warchief, Matt Moody and Preacher Gone to Texas, Jon and Dead to Fall, Kathi at Victory, Initial Records, Philly Shawn, Mikey, Brandonblood, anyone who offered help that I forgot, all the kids in Chicago who continue to support hardcore, and everyone who still cares about things beyond 'sick mosh parts.'

Other Zines to Check Out

- Warchief Fanzine #1- interviews w/ A Death For Every Sin, Arma Angelus, The Promise, etc. quietxpanic@aol.com
- The Big Hurt #1- a good Chicago scene report, rants and opinions, etc. For more info, e-mail klepper at thexbigxhurt@hotmail.com
- The Consequence #2- Interviews with Punch in The Face and The Effigies, available at most good record stores in Chicago.
- Cut The Tension #4- Interviews with Carry On, Death Threat, and Striking Distance. Check it out on the internet at www.cutthetension.com
- Impact Fanzine #1- Interviews with Floorpunch, Rain on the Parade, Automatic, Purpose, Hands Tied, etc. Amazing zine, I highly recommend it. E-mail Pete Russo at pete22au@hotmail.com for more info
- Not In Order Fanzine #5- Interviews with Madball, Slapshot, Suicide File, Death Threat, Hope Conspiracy, etc. E-mail them at NotInOrderBHC@aol.com

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